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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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FM AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1786
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALEXANDRIA 0432

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EG
SUBJECT: POST-MORTEM ON THE GUMRUK BY-ELECTION

REF: A. CAIRO 12830, B. ALEXANDRIA 0364 C. CAIRO 13194

1. IN DISCUSSION WITH CONGEN JUNE 8, FAROUK GARRANA, CHAIRMAN OF THE ALEXANDRIA MISR PARTY OUTLINED BACKGROUND OF GUMRUK BY-ELECTION AND INDICATED WHY HE BELIEVED RESULTS HAD BEEN SO FAVORABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT (MISR) PARTY.

2. WHEN IT APPEARED THAT WAFD PARTY WAS CHALLENGING THE GOVERNMENT OPENLY AND PUTTING A CONCERTED EFFORT TO WIN AN OTHERWISE UNIMPORTANT BY-ELECTION, THE MISR PARTY DECIDED TO RESPOND WITH AN ALL-OUT CAMPAIGN OF ITS OWN IN ORDER TO MAKE THE BEST POSSIBLE SHOWING. GARRANA AND GOVERNOR HODEIB WERE VERY ACTIVE, CIRTUALLY EVERY MINISTER WHO HAD ANY PROJECTS IN THE AREA VISITED GUMRUK AND SPOKE, ALL VOTERS IN THE AREA WERE EITHER CALLED UPON PERSONALLY OR GIVEN LITERATURE, ETC. CAMPAIGN STRATEGY WAS CAREFULLY DRAWN -- COUNTERING THE WAFD SPEAKERS BY ASKING WHAT PROGRAM THEY HAD TO IMPROVE THE CITIZEN'S LOT, AND EMPHASIZING THAT IF THE MISR PARTY CANDIDATE WON, IT WAS HIS PARTY THAT WAS IN POWER AND COULD DO SOMETHING FOR THE PEOPLE. PM SALEM WAS HELD TO SPEAK AT THE LAST MINUTE BEFORE VOTING
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SO THAT HE COULD ANSWER SARAGEDDIN AND PUT THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM ACROSS. GARRANA ADMITTED THAT PRESIDENT SADAT'S MAY 14 SPEECH ABOUT THE ENEMIES OF DEMOCRACY AND THE FORTHCOMING REFERENDUM WAS ALSO AN IMPORTANT FACTOR.

3. GARRANA GAVE THE FINAL FIGURES IN THE GUMRUK BY-ELECTION AS FOLLOWS: 26,103 VOTES WERE CAST OUT OF ABOUT 38,000 REGISTERED

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VOTERS. THERE WERE 833 INVALID VOTES AND THE THREE MAJOR CANDIDATES RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING: MOHAMED DIAB (MISR PARTY) 19,669; AHMED IZZET (WAFD PARTY) 4,448; AHMED MOUSTAFA (LEFTIST) 314. INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES RECEIVED BETWEEN 57 AND 92 VOTES EACH.

4. AS TO THE FUTURE, GARRANA OPINED THAT THE WAFD WAS THROUGH BECAUSE IT WAS A SMALL GROUP OF A FEW LEADERS LOOKING FOR A FOLLOWING, TRYING TO USE AN OLD NAME -- NOT A GENUINE CAUSE THAT WAS SEEKING LEADERSHIP. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE LEFTISTS WERE COMPLETELY COMMUNIST DOMINATED -- THERE WAS NO TRUE NATIONAL LEFT. THESE PEOPLE WOULD NEVER BE AN EFFECTIVE POLITICAL FORCE BECAUSE THEY ARE ANTI-RELIGION AND COULD NOT ATTRACT A LARGE FOLLOWING. GARRANA RATHER SAW THE GOVERNMENT PARTY GROWING AND PERHAPS SPLITTING INTO TWO OR MORE PARTIES. HE SAID THAT HE HIMSELF DID NOT APPROVE OF ALL THE DECISIONS OF THE PARTY AND IF HE FOUND GOOD SUPPORT, HE MIGHT BE INCLINED TO GO THAT WAY.

5. COMMENT: GARRANA'S POST-MORTEM WAS SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT FROM HIS PRE-ELECTION DISCUSSION. HE HAD BEEN GUARDED ON HOW GREAT THE MISR PARTY EFFORT WAS EARLIER -- AND HE FELT HE COULD GIVE MORE ABOUT THE STRATEGY, WHICH IT APPEARS HE CONTROLLED, WORKED. HIS VIEW OF FUTURE DEMOCRATIC (I.E. PARTY) POLITICAL LIFE IN THE FUTURE IS INTERESTING. HE GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF SOMEONE WHO IS GENUINELY CONCERNED THAT DEMOCRACY IN EGYPT MUST GROW GRADUALLY AND RESPONSIBLY AND HE IS TRYING TO DO WHAT
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HE CAN. IF THERE IS A SPLIT IN THE MISR PARTY WITH WHICH GARRANA IS ASSOCIATED, I SUSPECT IT WILL BE ONE THAT WILL SHOW A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION OR EMPHASIS FROM THE MAIN BRANCH, BUT WILL NOT SERIOUSLY CHALLENGE ITS FUNDAMENTAL PROGRAMS.
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